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| PERSONAL AWARD RECOMMENDATION | | CASE ID: 1133327 | PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT The Privacy Act Statement for information on this form is contained in NAVMC Form 11000, Privacy Act Statement for Marine Corps Personnel and Pay Records. | |
| FROM: (Title and Address) CO SITE SPT (SELFRIDGE MI) 25THMAR 4TH MARDIV 27601 C ST SELFRIDGE ANGB MI 48045 | | TO: (Awarding Authority) COMMANDING GENERAL 4TH MARINE DIVISION 2000 OPELOUSAS AVENUE NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA | | |
| | | 14. EXP. OF ACTIVE DUTY: 12/31/2008 | | IF RETIREMENT, NUMBER OF YEARS: |
| 1. EDIPI: (b)(6) | 2. DESIG/NEC/MOS: 0302 | | 15. EST. DETACHMENT DATE: 12/14/2019 <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transfer <input type="checkbox"/> Terminal Leave <input type="checkbox"/> Impact Award | |
| 3. NAME (Last,first,MI): WAGNER, BENJAMIN M | | 4. COMPONENT (USN,USMC,etc.): USMCR | 16. NEW DUTY STATION (Home address if separation anticipated): N/A | |
| 5. GRADE/RANK: LTCOL | 17. UNIT AT TIME OF ACTION/SERVICE: H&S CO 1STBN 24THMAR 4TH MARDIV | | 18. DUTY ASSIGNMENT: Battalion CO | |
| 6. WARFARE DESIGNATOR (Navy Only): | | 7. RUC: 14161 | 19. PREVIOUS PERSONAL DECORATIONS AND PERIOD RECOGNIZED: MM - 01/11/2015 BS - 07/31/2008 NA - 09/23/2005 CR - 11/02/2004 | |
| 8. RECOMMENDED AWARD: MM - MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL | | 9. SPECIFIC ACHIEVEMENT: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | | |
| 10. TYPE: <input type="checkbox"/> Heroic <input type="checkbox"/> Heroic Posthumous <input type="checkbox"/> MIA <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meritorious <input type="checkbox"/> Meritorious Posthumous | | | | |
| 11. NUMBER OF AWARD OF RECOMMENDED MEDAL: 2 | | | 20. PERSONAL AWARDS RECOMMENDED-NOT YET APPROVED: | |
| 12. ACTION DATE/MERITORIOUS PERIOD: 07/01/2017 - 12/14/2019 | | | 21. OTHER PERSONNEL BEING RECOMMENDED FOR SAME ACTION: | |
| 13. GEOGRAPHIC AREA OF ACTION/SERVICE: CONUS | | | | |
| 22. I certify that the facts contained in the summary of action are <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> known to me <input type="checkbox"/> a matter of record | | | | |
| NAME, GRADE, TITLE OF ORIGINATOR GIANOPOULOS, JOHN, LTCOL CO | | SIGNATURE John Gianopoulos CO | | DATE 11/06/2019 |
| 23. FORWARDING ENDORSEMENTS BY VIA ADDRESSEE(S). | | | | |
| VIA COMMAND | RECOMMENDED AWARD | COMBAT "V" | SIGNATURE & GRADE | DATE FWD |
| CO 1/24 25TH MAR 4TH MARDIV (R/U) | MM - MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | John Gianopoulos John Gianopoulos LTCOL | 11/06/2019 13:34:07 |
| Commanding Officer 25TH MAR REGT 4TH MARDIV (R/U) | MM - MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | Justin Dunne Justin Dunne COL | 11/26/2019 17:33:47 |
| 24. TO BE COMPLETED BY AWARDING AUTHORITY | | | | |
| DISPOSITION OF BASIC RECOMMENDATION | COMBAT "V" | EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM | SIGNATURE, GRADE, TITLE | DATE APPROVED |
| MM - MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No | Halstead Meadows III Halstead Meadows III COL/Chief of Staff For Michael S Martin BGEN, CG, 4th MARDIV | 12/11/2019 13:59:59 |

Citation**MM approved as MM on 12/11/2019 13:59:59**

For outstanding meritorious service while serving as Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division from July 2017 to December 2019. During this period, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner consistently performed his duties in an exemplary and highly professional manner. His steadfast leadership, sound judgement, and sturdy professionalism enabled the battalion to successfully execute two major annual training exercises while also activating and deploying multiple formations in support of combat operations. His clear guidance empowered his subordinate commanders and battalion staff to plan and execute effective training, develop leaders of every rank, and increase deployment readiness. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner also fostered a positive command climate where Marines were enthusiastic to participate and eager to remain affiliated with the battalion, resulting in a significant increase in drill percentages that will contribute to the battalion's success long into the future. The net impact of his leadership was a better-trained, well-led, and disciplined battalion that stood ready to activate and deploy in support of national defense strategy objectives. His efforts to increase lethality undoubtedly impacted the overall combat readiness of his battalion, while the lessons learned and shared from his battalion's superior performance during service-level inspections, as well as the Integrated Training Exercise, will have a lasting impact on Marine Forces Reserve. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's tireless efforts to carry out his duties with unfailing good judgment, effectiveness, and total dedication to duty reflected great credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

Summary of Action

Lieutenant Colonel Ben Wagner distinguished himself through exceptional meritorious service and is enthusiastically recommended for the Meritorious Service Medal for his service as the Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, from July 2017 to December 2019. Over the course of his nearly two and a half years in command, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's steadfast leadership, sound judgement, and sturdy professionalism enabled the battalion to successfully execute two major annual training exercises while also activating and deploying multiple formations in support of combat operations. His clear and direct guidance empowered his subordinate commanders and the battalion staff to plan and execute efficient and effective training, develop leaders of every rank, and increase deployment readiness. The net impact of his leadership was a better-trained, well-led, and disciplined battalion that stood ready to answer the call to activate and deploy in support of the national and defense strategy objectives. His efforts undoubtedly impacted the overall combat readiness of his battalion, 25th Marine Regiment and 4th Marine Division, while the lessons learned and shared from his battalion's superior performance during service-level inspections, as well as the Integrated Training Exercise, will have a lasting impact on the combat readiness of Marine Forces Reserve.

Immediately upon taking command, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner laid the foundation for the battalion's success. He communicated his expectations and standards in his Commander's Training Guidance and Command Philosophy. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner delivered his vision via the Long Range Training Plan, which detailed his method and end state. Next, he turned his attention toward building the staff and filling key billets across the battalion. Event by event, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner diligently challenged his staff and commanders to execute his four-phased, incremental, standards-based training plan while keeping the ultimate objective in mind: superior performance at Integrated Training Exercise (ITX) 4-19. Throughout this two and half year journey, he ensured the battalion remained focused on its enduring priority tasks: force protection, Professional Military Education (PME), retention and recruiting family readiness, and inspections.

Lieutenant Colonel Wagner appointed his battalion Executive Officer (XO) as the primary recruiting officer for key billets and manager of the Billet Identification Codes. Under Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's guidance, key billets were filled, notably the Battalion Intelligence Officer, Operations Officer, Communications Officer, Scout Sniper Platoon Commander, Air Officer, and Logistics Officer. These billets included only those officers recruited under Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's guidance and not those assigned by Marine Corps Recruiting Command. The effect of this recruiting effort was fivefold: 1) it provided strong leadership across the warfighting functions and enhanced training for Marines while increasing proficiency in core competencies; 2) it provided a healthy succession plan to sustain the battalion's leadership team over time; 3) it allowed flexibility within the battalion to move officers into critical billets; 4) it enabled the battalion to provide seven officers during 2018 to deploy in support of Marine Forces Reserves' operational requirements; and 5) it placed ownership on Selected Marine Corps Reserve Marines to recruit and retain their own, allowing the Inspector-Instructor staff to focus on inspections and other enduring tasks benefiting the battalion.

Phase I of LtCol Wagner's training plan focused on the fire team and squad core collective capabilities, fires, command and control (C2), and combat service support (CSS) in austere training conditions, including live fire exercises, combat operations center evolutions, and force-on-force patrolling at Camp Grayling, MI. Phase II focused on the squad and platoon core collective capabilities, company fire support teams (FiST), and Scout Sniper Platoon (SSP), C2, and CSS. During this phase, the battalion conducted Exercise Nordic Frost at Camp Ethan Allen Training Site (CEATS) to capitalize on individual and collective offensive and defensive training proficiency in a cold-weather environment. Despite a government shutdown and significant budget impediments during the exercise, the battalion utilized creative solutions based on Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's guidance to maximize training opportunities in Jericho, VT. The Phase II collective capabilities and the fires' synchronization exercises resulted in stronger squads, platoons, and proficient mortar sections. This phase encompassed many simulated and live-fire exercises to gain proficiency. C2 and CSS were also built and enhanced during this phase, which included regimental level attachments from Combat Engineer Battalion and Truck Company. At CEATS, the training first focused on the small unit and then culminated in a multi-day fire team evaluation in the form of a non-live fire field exercise in a cold-weather environment. Nordic Frost's self-evaluated training approach set the necessary conditions for follow-on efforts for the pre-deployment training plan leading up to Integrated Training Exercise 4-19.

During Phase III, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner focused the battalion on platoon and company core collective capabilities, supported non-live fire and live fire events, FiST refinement and sustainment, CSS, C2, medical, and dental readiness, and annual training requirements. He required multiple training venues and resources to provide the best training to Marines and staff using a systems approach to training in preparation for ITX 4-19. For example, over multiple field exercises at Camp Atterbury, Indiana, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner garnered exceptional training from the Marine Corps Tactics Operations Group to enhance and refine C2 capabilities, The Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Atlantic produced the Fire Support Coordination Center Course, and the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Secondary Imaging Digital System (MSIDS) provided exceptional training. At Camp Grayling, Michigan, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner directed the unit to leverage the Virtual Combined Arms Exercise to enhance company combined arms battle drills, battalion C2, and the Fire Support Coordination Center (FSCC) in the clearance of fires. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's drive for excellence and the best training to build his staff, companies, and Marines set the conditions for success during ITX 4-19 and beyond. His participation at the planning conferences and integration of supporting attachments set necessary, valuable conditions for success leading up to execution of ITX.

Phase IV training was the successful execution of ITX 4-19 during which the battalion demonstrated the desired level of proficiency in all warfighting functions. During this phase, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner led the development, planning, coordination, and execution of the battalion's annual training for ITX 4-19, held at Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Twenty Nine Palms, California. In large part due to Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's leadership, Company B was the first reserve unit to successfully complete R410A platoon attacks at night. Additionally, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines completed the intense training exercise over a two-week period with minimal heat-related injuries, enabling momentum, combat-effectiveness, and morale. ITX was executed as a MAGTF deployment and was a capstone training event involving combined arms live-fire training focused on both offensive and defensive mission-essential tasks. As such, core and non-

core competencies were evaluated for events such as the 400 series ranges, the Mobile Assault Course, the Air Assault Course, the Motorized Operations Training Course, the Motorized Fire and Maneuver Exercise, and the Fire Support Coordination Exercise. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's engaging leadership and his approach to training resulted in each company performing superbly, while the battalion COC seamlessly led operations across the warfighting functions.

Throughout Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's tenure, the battalion performed extremely well during multiple inspections: the Commanding General's Readiness Inspection (CGI); Force Readiness Assessment and Assistance Program (FRAAP); Environmental; Ground Safety; Marine Corps Administrative Analysis Team (MCAAT). Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's leadership played a significant role in the unit's ability to prepare for, undergo, and successfully pass these inspections while maintaining a focus on training and combat readiness. All three rifle companies exceeded expectations on the FRAAP and two of the three impressively exceeded 90%. To date, no unit has ever received a higher MCAAT rating, and in Jun 2018, the battalion received a near-perfect rating on the CGRI. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner integrated himself and the battalion into the preparation, execution, and remediation of each examination leading to excellent assessments by inspectors across the staff sections and subordinate companies. His support for the battalion Inspector-Instructor in these efforts significantly improved the health of the battalion. In virtually every account, the clear message of importance and direction of resources from Lieutenant Colonel Wagner was integral to the battalion's measurable increase in readiness. Additionally, his propensity for improving and sustaining morale for the unit and the individual Marines directly led to the awarding of 46 Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medals during the period.

Lieutenant Colonel Wagner distinguished himself as an exceedingly proficient and versatile commander. He is a proven leader whose performance consistently surpassed expectations. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner successfully operated across the warfighting functions and all lines of communication, whether they were administrative or operational. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's leadership, versatility, and tireless dedication to duty directly reflected in the battalion's success. Accordingly, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner is enthusiastically recommended for the Meritorious Service Medal.

COMMANDING GENERAL

4TH MARINE DIVISION

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL Gold Star in Lieu of Second Award to

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BENJAMIN M. WAGNER
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE

for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

For outstanding meritorious service while serving as Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division from July 2017 to December 2019. During this period, Lieutenant Colonel Wagner consistently performed his duties in an exemplary and highly professional manner. His steadfast leadership, sound judgement, and sturdy professionalism enabled the battalion to successfully execute two major annual training exercises while also activating and deploying multiple formations in support of combat operations. His clear guidance empowered his subordinate commanders and battalion staff to plan and execute effective training, develop leaders of every rank, and increase deployment readiness. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner also fostered a positive command climate where Marines were enthusiastic to participate and eager to remain affiliated with the battalion, resulting in a significant increase in drill percentages that will contribute to the battalion's success long into the future. The net impact of his leadership was a better-trained, well-led, and disciplined battalion that stood ready to activate and deploy in support of national defense strategy objectives. His efforts to increase lethality undoubtedly impacted the overall combat readiness of his battalion, while the lessons learned and shared from his battalion's superior performance during service-level inspections, as well as the Integrated Training Exercise, will have a lasting impact on Marine Forces Reserve. Lieutenant Colonel Wagner's tireless efforts to carry out his duties with unfailing good judgment, effectiveness, and total dedication to duty reflected great credit upon him and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Marine Corps and the United States Naval Service.

For the President



Commanding General, 4th Marine Division



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
HAS AWARDED THE

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL

GOLD STAR IN LIEU OF SECOND AWARD

TO

LIEUTENANT COLONEL BENJAMIN M. WAGNER
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE

FOR

OUTSTANDING MERITORIOUS SERVICE FROM JULY 2017 TO DECEMBER 2019



GIVEN THIS 11TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2019

MICHAEL S. MARTIN
BRIGADIER GENERAL
COMMANDING GENERAL
4TH MARINE DIVISION